



Women in Public Life: Missouri's First Lady

Lori Hauser Holden views being an “Ambassador for the State” as a high priority and advocates for a wide range of issues. Born at Whiteman Air Force Base on December 5, 1957, Mrs. Holden has remained a lifelong Missouri resident and is committed to promoting and improving the State of Missouri. Mrs. Holden graduated from Aurora High School in 1976, and earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from Southwest Missouri State University in 1980. Mrs. Holden’s political activism began during her college years at SMSU where she was active in local and statewide campaigns.

Prior to assuming her role as Missouri’s First Lady, Mrs. Holden was employed as an arts administrator for the Capital City Council on the Arts and as a facilitator for the Americans with Disabilities Advisory Board for the Bi-State Development Agency. Additionally, she served as a volunteer member of the Environmental Advisory Board of Springfield, Green County; a contributor to the Save the Children program and board president of the Family Mental Health Center of Jefferson City.



Other policy initiatives include advocating for women’s issues, mental health, the arts and neighborhood revitalization. In November 2001, Mrs. Holden testified before the Jefferson City Council in support of Jefferson City beautification and revitalization. Additionally, she was appointed to the Missouri Domestic Violence Task Force in August 2001.

Lori Hauser Holden and her husband, Governor Bob Holden were married on December 17, 1983. They are the proud parents of Robert Lee III (11) and John D. (7). Both the Governor and First Lady are very active in their sons’ activities, including soccer, basketball, and little league. The Holdens are members of Community Christian Church in Jefferson City.

As the mother of two young sons, education issues are extremely important to Mrs. Holden. She routinely visits schools throughout the state and was instrumental in establishing the first Missouri chapter of First Book, a national, non-profit organization that provides books to under-privileged children. Adequate healthcare for women and children is also a high priority of Mrs. Holden’s. On October 19, 2001, in conjunction with the American Cancer Society, she organized the first Missouri Breast Cancer Awareness Lighting of the Dome Ceremony.

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Women in Elected Office – 2002

National Statistics

In 2002, 73, or 13.6% women serve in the U.S. Congress. Thirteen women serve in the U.S. Senate, and 60 women serve in the U.S. House, both all-time highs. In addition, two women serve as Delegates to the House from the Virgin Islands and Washington DC. The number of women in statewide elective executive posts is 89, while the proportion of women in state legislatures is at 22.4 percent.

In 2002, women hold 27.4% of the 321 statewide elective executive available positions. Among these women, 43 are Democrats, 41 are Republicans, 1 Independent, and 3 were elected in nonpartisan races.

In 2002, 1,668, or 22.5% of the 7,424 state legislators in the United States are women. Women hold 403, or 20.3% of the 1,984 state senate seats and 1,265, or 23.3% of the 5,440 state house seats. The number of women serving in state legislatures has increased more than five-fold since 1969 when 301, or 4.0% of all state legislators were women.

Women of Color

Of the 73 women serving in the 107th U.S. Congress, 20, or 27.4% are women of color; in addition, an African America woman and a Caribbean American woman serve as Delegates to the House from Washington, DC and the Virgin Islands, respectively.

Of the 88 women serving in statewide elective executive offices, 4, or 4.5% are women of color.

Of the 1,668 women state legislators serving nationwide, 269, or 16.2% are women of color. They include 75 senators and 194 representatives; all but 8 are Democrats. Women of color constitute 3.6% of the total 7,424 state legislators.

– Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute of Politics – Rutgers

Elected Women of Missouri – An Historical Summary

U.S Congress

Jean Carnahan

Democrat U.S. Senate 2001-present

Carnahan was appointed by Governor Roger B. Wilson to fill a position won posthumously by her husband.

Jo Ann Emerson

Republican U.S. Rep 1996-present

Emerson won a special election to fill a vacancy and a regular election to serve as full term on the same day.

Karen McCarthy

Democrat U.S. Rep 1995-present

Pat Danner

Democrat U.S. Rep 1993-2001

Joan Kelly Horn

Democrat U.S. Rep 1991-1993

Leonor Kretzer Sullivan

Democrat U.S. Rep 1953-1977

Statewide Elective Executives

Nancy Farmer

Democrat State Treasurer 2001-present

Claire McCaskill

Democrat State Auditor 1999-present

Rebecca M. Cook

Democrat Secretary of State 1994-2001

Cook was appointed in December 1994 to fill a vacancy caused by the impeachment of Judith Moriarty.

Judith K. Moriarty

Democrat Secretary of State 1993-1994

Moriarty was impeached in December 1994.

Margaret Kelly

Republican State Auditor 1984-1999

Kelly was initially appointed to fill a vacancy and was subsequently elected.

Harriett Woods

Democrat Lt. Governor 1985-1988